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Bangalore Mirror ON SATURDAY

TEMP Max 30 | Min 22 | Humidity 65% Mostly cloudy Sensex 76,802 | Nifty 24,013 | Gold 1,47,321 | Silver 2,33,693 | Dollar 94.28 | Euro 108.13 | GBP 124.72

Toddlers seated precariously on fuel tanks or infants held in the arms of pillion riders are common sights in city though rules demand helmets or safety harnesses for kids to keep them safe while traversing city's treacherous traffic

STOP KIDDING AROUND

Enforcement whether through challans or manual checks is largely focused on adults

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Concerns over child safety on two-wheelers continue to rise as several families are seen travelling in violation of basic road safety rules. In many instances, scooters carry as many as four passengers, with toddlers seated precariously on fuel tanks or infants being held in the arms of pillion riders, often without helmets or any form of protective restraint.

According to Bengaluru traffic police data, the city has registered 13.6 lakh cases against riders and over 6.5 lakh cases against pillion riders for not wearing helmets up to May this year. Under the Motor Vehicles Act, safety provisions for children on two-wheelers are clearly defined as children above four years of age are mandated to wear helmets while travelling on two-wheelers. For infants aged between nine months and four years, the law requires the use of a safety harness that securely fastens the child's upper torso to the rider, ensuring stability and reducing the risk of being thrown off during movement.

In November last year, the Karnataka High Court directed

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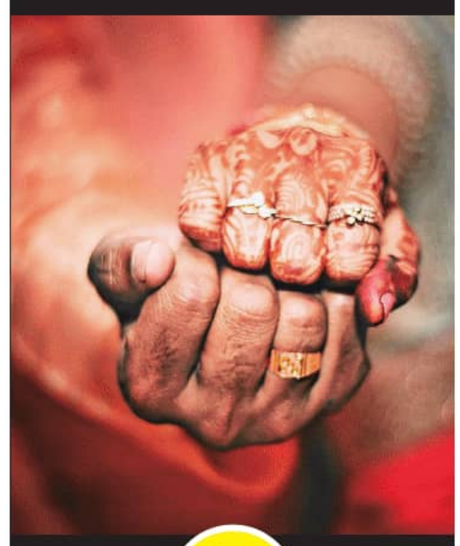
KAUSHIK JN

WAIT FOR IT

Only 30 couples have received first instalment as delays mar incentive scheme for inter-caste marriages



PAGE 6

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THINGS TO DO

01 Yoga reset

Grand Mercure Bengaluru will host a rejuvenating International Yoga Day session. Led by wellness expert Shibani from Swaastham, the hour-long morning experience will focus on breathwork, balance and mindful movement in a calm, luxury setting. **Where: Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall, CV Raman Nagar; When: June 21, 7 am to 8 am**

02 Visual voices

To mark the 75th birth anniversary of renowned cartoonist Maya Kamath, the Indian Institute of Cartoonists is hosting an exhibition of 150 international cartoons from the International Maya Kamath Memorial Cartoon Contest 2026, themed on gender equality and women's rights.
Where: Indian Cartoon Gallery, Midford Garden Road; When: Running until June 27, 10 am to 6 pm

03 Nature therapy

To mark International Yoga Day, Hosachiguru will host Yoga Day at a Farm. The wellness experience will combine yoga amid nature with an opportunity to reconnect with the outdoors in a serene farm setting. **Where: Maamara Farm, Ramanagara; When: June 21, 7.30 am**

04 Verse voyage

Poet and artist Eva Garg will be the featured performer at Tuesdays. The event, recognised in the Limca Book of Records as India's longest-running poetry event.
Where: Urban Solace, Ulsoor; When: June 23, 7.30 pm to 9 pm

05 Wellness drive

To mark International Yoga Day, Nexus Shantiniketan Mall will host Yogathon 2026 in association with The Art of Living Foundation, featuring guided yoga, breathing exercises, meditation and wellness sessions led by experienced instructors. **Where: Nexus Shantiniketan Mall, Whitefield; When: June 21, 6.30 am to 9.30 am**

Older women pay price of HPV vaccine exclusion

Doctors endorse early immunisation, yet adults seeking protection must often turn to private hospitals, where vaccine expenses place prevention beyond reach

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As awareness of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination grows, many women above the age of 15 are finding themselves excluded from government-supported vaccination programmes and forced to seek the vaccine in private hospitals at considerable expense.

While the government's HPV vaccination drive primarily targets girls aged 9–14 years, adults who wish to be vaccinated often have no option but to pay out of pocket. Depending on the vaccine type, the cost can range from around Rs 4,350 for the quadrivalent vaccine to nearly Rs 11,200 for the nine-valent vaccine per dose in the private sector, making complete vaccination unaffordable for many families. The issue was highlighted by a Bengaluru resident who recently got his wife and daughter vaccinated. "Getting my wife and daughter vaccinated cost a bomb, but when I went to a government hospital, they said they vaccinate only girls aged between 9 and 14 years. Don't you think that's unfair?" he said.

Expert view

Medical experts explain that the focus on younger adolescents is based on scientific evidence. Dr Joshi Divya Rakesh, Consultant – Infectious Disease & Infection Control, KIMS Hospitals, Mahadevapura, said, "This age group is targeted because vaccination works best before HPV exposure begins, that is, before sexual debut. Immunologically, adolescents in this age bracket also mount a stronger antibody response than older individuals, which is why a two-dose schedule suffices instead of three doses."

According to Dr Joshi, individuals aged 15 years and above have traditionally required a three-dose schedule administered over six months, although recommendations continue to evolve. She noted that vaccination in adulthood remains beneficial because it can still protect against HPV strains to which a person has not yet been exposed. International guidelines support catch-up vaccination up to 26 years of age, with some countries extending recommendations up to 45 years based on individual risk assessment.

Dr Abhilasha Narayan, Consultant Gynaecologic Oncologist at HCG Cancer Hospital, KR Road, Bengaluru, emphasised that protection is not limited to adolescents. "Nevertheless, benefits have been noted and efficacy has been documented in studies even at older ages, and the vaccine is approved for use up to 45 years of age," she said.

Experts also point out that broader vaccination coverage could help reduce HPV-related cancers and transmission. Dr Narayan added, "The government should first include vaccination for boys and then consider extending coverage beyond the 9–14 age group. This would definitely help curb community transmission."

Official focus

However, health officials maintain that the current focus remains on achieving higher coverage among the target age group. An official associated with the programme said coverage levels among eligible girls still need improvement, and efforts are presently directed towards increasing uptake within the 9–14 age bracket before considering expansion to older age groups.

Doctors back adolescent targeting for stronger immunity, while specialists urge broader eligibility, arguing expanded coverage could reduce cancer risks and transmission

With cervical cancer continuing to be one of the leading cancers among Indian women, public health advocates argue that widening access to HPV vaccination, especially for older adolescents and adults who missed vaccination earlier, could play a crucial role in reducing the future disease burden.

Feeders shielded as dog welfare reviewed

The Bengaluru South City Corporation has appealed to residents not to harass people who feed stray dogs, reiterating that feeding community dogs is legal and protected under Supreme Court guidelines. The appeal was made during a high-level review meeting chaired by Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Shrinath, where officials, animal welfare groups, volunteers and stray dog feeders discussed the scientific management of stray dogs, the identification of designated feeding zones, and the implementation of animal welfare programmes. More than 50 participants attended the meeting and shared their suggestions. Officials said efforts are underway to identify safe, designated feeding spots across the corporation's limits to minimise inconvenience to residents while ensuring animal welfare. Citizens and Resident Welfare Associations have been urged to participate in the process. The meeting also reviewed the progress of Animal Birth Control (ABC) programmes, vaccination drives, rescue operations, shelter homes and adoption initiatives. Authorities stressed that stray dogs should not be relocated and that both residents and feeders must work together to ensure peaceful coexistence. **— BMB**

Surveyor dream derailed by new criteria

Thousands of aspirants hoping to secure Surveyor posts have been left in uncertainty after the State Government proposed revising the eligibility criteria, effectively excluding candidates who applied with only a Class 12 qualification. The recruitment drive for 750 Surveyor posts, launched in 2024 through the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC), had originally allowed both engineering graduates and PUC, CBSE and ICSE Class 12 pass candidates with at least 60 per cent marks in Mathematics to apply. However, a draft notification issued on June 8, 2026, seeks to restrict eligibility to candidates with engineering, BTech or BSc degrees, excluding a large section of applicants who applied under the earlier norms.

The proposed change has triggered widespread resentment, as the recruitment process has remained stalled for more than two years despite nearly one lakh candidates applying and paying examination fees. KPSC had initially scheduled examinations for July 2024, but they were never conducted, even after the number of vacancies increased from 264 to 750 and age-limit relaxations were introduced to attract more applicants. Candidates argue that altering the eligibility criteria midway through the recruitment process is unfair, particularly as thousands of PUC-qualified aspirants invested significant time and resources preparing for a selection process that has yet to begin. **— BMB**

Conference honours Kannada literary legend

A one-day national conference on the life and works of Dr GS Shivarudrappa was held at Silicon City College, KR Puram, as part of his birth centenary celebrations. Academics, researchers and Kannada teachers from across the country participated in discussions on his literary contributions and legacy.

Inaugurating the conference, Prof BK Ravi, Vice-Chancellor of Bengaluru North University, said literature nurtures sensitivity, wisdom and social responsibility, and urged younger generations to engage with literary works. Delivering the keynote address, Prof HC Boralingaiah, former Vice-Chancellor of Kannada University, Hampi, highlighted the philosophical and humanistic dimensions of Dr Shivarudrappa's poetry and prose. The conference featured 25 research papers on his life, works and literary philosophy, with over 120 participants. It concluded with a call to preserve Kannada literary heritage and inspire future generations. **— BMB**

Agara Lake breeds drug-defying germs

Hidden menace surfaces beneath Agara's waters as scientists uncover resistant microbes, signalling escalating ecological and public safety concerns

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A study has revealed the presence of multidrug-resistant bacteria in Agara Lake in HSR Layout.

Water samples collected from four different locations around the lake uncovered that at least five different bacterial strains were unaffected by three commonly used antibiotics penicillin, streptomycin and methicillin. Experts say antibiotic resistance in bacteria points to the overuse or misuse of these antibiotics, mainly due to a lack of regulatory measures. Apart from antibiotic misuse, poor management of municipal and hospital waste is an important factor contributing to multidrug resistance in bacteria, which can be detrimental to human health.

According to researchers from the School of Allied Healthcare and Sciences at JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), these findings highlight the role of polluted water bodies in promoting the co-selection and spread of multidrug-resistant bacteria, raising serious concerns for environmental and human health.

Six mercury-resistant bacterial isolates were identified. Of these, five showed resistance to at least one antibiotic. All five isolates were resistant to methicillin.

Agara Lake was selected for the study as it is situated between Madiwala and Bellandur lakes, and the interconnection between the lakes has been disrupted by rapid urbanisation.

"Nine different antibiotics were selected based on the frequency of their use. We found that five mercury-resistant isolates were resistant to at least one antibiotic. On the other hand, none of the isolates showed resistance to ciprofloxacin, ceftazidime, imipenem, amoxicillin, levofloxacin or chloramphenicol," the study noted.

Mercury contamination

The lake was also studied for the presence of heavy metal contamination. Researchers found that the level of mercury in the lake water was 0.9078 mg/L. According to Pollution Control Board standards, a mercury concentration of up to 0.01 mg/L is considered acceptable. The study highlights that heavy metal pollution in Agara Lake could be due to the discharge of treated sewage from a sewage treatment plant.

"Mercury is highly capable of causing harm and toxicity when combined with other elemental forms. Mercury can bind strongly with sulphur and thiol groups in enzymes present in the human body, inhibiting metabolic reactions, causing enzyme inactivation and resulting in harmful effects on human health," the study noted.

Health concerns aplenty

According to healthcare experts, antibiotic-resistant bacteria in lakes can cause infections when contaminated water enters the body through cuts, wounds, the eyes, nose, mouth or accidental ingestion. These infections are often harder to treat, leading to prolonged illness and increased complications, particularly among vulnerable individuals.

Experts advise avoiding polluted water bodies, covering wounds before exposure and washing thoroughly afterwards. Medical attention should be sought if symptoms such as redness, swelling, fever or pus-filled wounds develop. Dr Aishwarya R, Consultant – Infectious Diseases at Aster RV Hospital, warned that antibiotic resistance can spread through soil, wastewater and agricultural produce, making it a wider public health concern rather than an issue confined to individual antibiotic misuse.

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Jealous woman held over private photo threats

Chamarajpet police arrested a woman, identified as Shwetha, for allegedly stealing private photographs of her friend and threatening to circulate them on social media following a personal dispute.

Police said Shwetha became hostile after learning that her friend was in contact with her boyfriend. She allegedly accessed his mobile phone, obtained the photographs without consent and later sent some of them to the victim's husband, causing family discord. The accused also allegedly threatened to release more images online. Following a complaint from the victim's husband, police registered a case under relevant provisions of the Information Technology Act and arrested her. Several obscene photographs were recovered from her mobile phone. —BMB

Fake cops loot ₹20 lakh

A CID inspector and two associates have been booked for allegedly posing as police officers and robbing Kerala youths of ₹20 lakh near a hotel in Madiwala.

Police said the trio used a CID jeep and identity cards to question the victims about cash allegedly meant for trading. When the youths refused to hand over the money, the accused allegedly assaulted and threatened them before snatching the cash.

The victims recorded the incident and later lodged a complaint. Police Commissioner Seemanth Kumar Singh said a case has been registered, the jeep seized and the stolen money recovered. The accused are absconding. —BMB

CRIME FILES

Treatment centre turns murder scene

A 62-year-old rehabilitation centre owner was allegedly hacked to death by inmates at his facility in BCC Layout under the Chandra Layout police station limits on Friday. The victim, Shivalingaiah (62), had been running the centre for several years. Police said a quarrel broke out between him and a group of inmates, who allegedly locked him in a room and fatally assaulted him. Another person at the facility was attacked but escaped. The accused allegedly fled in the victim's car and motorcycle. —BMB

STP tank swallows two workers

Two BWSSB workers are feared dead after falling into a sewage treatment plant (STP) tank at Belagere in Varthur on Thursday evening. The missing workers, Akilan Mohan (30) and Brijesh Kumar, were carrying out maintenance work when they fell into the tank. A third worker, Karthik, escaped and raised the alarm.

NDRF and Fire and Emergency Services personnel launched a rescue operation, which continued through the night amid difficult conditions. —BMB

Prison denies VIP favour claims

Bengaluru Central Prison authorities have dismissed allegations made by former undertrial inmate Sandhya Nagaraj regarding irregularities in the women's wing.

Officials said a surprise inspection on June 11 and a subsequent visit by the Deputy Inspector General of Prisons found no prohibited items or evidence supporting the claims. Authorities also denied reports of special treatment being given to Pavithra Gowda, an accused in the Renukaswamy murder case, and urged responsible reporting. —BMB

Three held in deepfake plot

The Cyber Crime Police of Bengaluru City have arrested three men for allegedly creating and circulating objectionable AI-generated images and videos of actress Rukmini Vasanth on social media. Police said the manipulated content was intended to defame the actress, damage her reputation and invade her privacy, causing mental distress. Following a complaint, a special investigation team traced the accused through digital evidence. The arrested men have been identified as Ravikumar (24) from Bagalkot district, Chandrakanth (33) of Kamakshipalya and Ranjith (25) of Nagasandra, Bengaluru.

Police seized three mobile phones and arrested the accused. A case has been registered under the Information Technology Act and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, and further investigations are underway. —BMB

Demarcation begins: These paths are made for walking

BCCC begins colour-coding spaces dedicated to vendors, pedestrians and frontage of commercial set-ups after court direction in plea over Gandhi Bazaar encroachments

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Petition alleges vendor encroachments blocked pedestrian movement and customer access

Here is good news for pedestrians, who have struggled to walk on the footpath of Gandhi Bazar for years. With much of the footpath occupied by vendors and food trucks, many pedestrians, especially senior citizens, found it difficult to use the walkway. If the ongoing demarcation exercise is any indication, Gandhi Bazar's footpath is set to become more pedestrian-friendly. On Friday, Bengaluru Central City Corporation (BCCC) employees were seen earmarking spaces on the footpath for pedestrians. "I am assigned to mark the space for pedestrians. No parking of vehicles or street vendors is allowed in this space," said Manjanna, a work inspector of BCCC.

Welcoming the initiative, Basavanagudi Heritage Residents' Welfare Association Secretary Guruprasad RK said encroachments by street vendors and others had caused inconvenience to pedestrians.

"We had to file a petition in the High Court seeking direction to the BCCC authorities to clear encroachments on the footpath. Now, I am very happy to see BCCC employees earmarking the spaces meant for pedestrians, parking vehicles and vending places," he said.

The writ petition was filed by BL Sanjeev, proprietor of a readymade garment shop. In his petition, Sanjeev stated that despite vendors being allotted designated vending spaces on Gandhi Bazar, many occupied the entire area in front of his shop, restricting access to customers. He also contended that the vending area was being used to park two-wheelers, blocking pedestrians and shoppers.

The petition stated that while the vending spaces allotted by the BBMP and now the GBA comply with the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, and the rules framed under it, the interests of all stakeholders must be protected equally.

It argued that existing commercial shop owners on Gandhi Bazar and pedestrians using the footpath are also stakeholders. The petition stressed that vending activities should not hinder access to shops or obstruct pedestrian movement.

> **"We had to file a petition in the High Court seeking direction to the BCCC authorities to clear encroachments on the footpath. Now, I am very happy to see BCCC employees earmarking the spaces meant for pedestrians, parking vehicles and vending places**
> – Guruprasad RK, Basavanagudi Heritage Residents' Welfare Association

While hearing the petition, Justice Suraj Govindaraj observed that the areas must be clearly demarcated to ensure that the rights of vendors, pedestrians and shop owners do not overlap. The High Court directed the respondents to mark separate spaces with distinct colours for street vendors, pedestrian movement and the frontage of existing commercial establishments. The court said the exercise would help protect the interests of all stakeholders equitably and ordered the authorities to complete the demarcation process within six weeks. The hearing of the petition is posted on July 2.

All norms violated during school rush hours

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the state government to implement child safety measures, including helmets and safety harnesses for minors riding pillion on two-wheelers, within six months. The order was issued by a bench of Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice CM Poonacha while disposing of a PIL filed by Dr Archana Bhat. However, enforcement on city roads remains minimal.

A traffic police official explained that enforcement whether through challans or manual checks, is largely focused on adults, "We do book cases for violations such as triple riding and not wearing helmets. However, there is no special enforcement to ensure children are wearing helmets. We register cases only when a minor is found riding a vehicle or when parents are found violating rules involving children, and in some cases children sitting behind automatically become pillion riders so we book cases as pillion riders without helmets."

The result is that children are frequently seen travelling in highly unsafe conditions standing on the front footboard of scooters, seated as pillion riders, or placed between two adults on a single two-wheeler.

Traffic expert Prof MN Shreehari says this increases the risk of severe injury in the event of sudden braking or collisions. "People often blame traffic or road conditions for accidents, but 50% of accidents blame is also on the drivers. They know the road condition and they the traffic situation, so they must also know driving conditions and take precautions and safety measures."

He said that when it comes to children on two-wheelers, the responsibility lies with parents. "Long rides apart, in many cases, parents take children on a ride for short distances to calm them. This is very common, but this is the highest form of violating and breaking the rule," said Shreehari.

Speaking about enforcement measures, police commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh said if there are repeated violations, cases are booked under the Juvenile Justice Act for negligence. Singh pointed out that when many adults themselves flout helmet rules, it becomes difficult to expect children to follow safety norms.

He stressed that every commuter must understand that traffic rules are meant for their own safety, not to evade police action. "It was observed that some riders wear helmets only when they notice police presence, despite the fact that accidents can occur anytime and anywhere," he said. The commissioner further said that once people begin to treat safety measures seriously instead of trying to "fool" enforcement authorities, compliance will naturally improve, and parents will also be more likely to ensure that their children wear helmets.

A senior traffic police officer highlighted unsafe practices during school rush hours, noting that officials frequently observe extreme overcrowding on scooters without basic safety precautions. He said there are instances where parents ride with a crying infant held in one hand, putting both the child and rider at serious risk.

A traffic police official also pointed out that children rarely are seen wearing helmets, as some parents avoid buying them due to financial constraints. "In several cases, families try to manage by travelling together on a single two-wheeler, assuming children can be accommodated without risk, despite the obvious safety hazards involved," he said.

A senior traffic police officer further said that seating multiple children on the front floorboard of two-wheelers is extremely dangerous, as it becomes a "crush zone" during sudden braking or head-on collisions. He urged parents to ensure that children are seated at the rear and provided with proper ISI-marked helmets, while highlighting the irony of adults wearing helmets but failing to protect their children. When asked about availability of children's helmets in the market, the official noted that although helmets are easily available, many parents are not keen on purchasing them.

> **"In several cases, families try to manage by travelling together on a single two-wheeler, assuming children can be accommodated without risk, despite the obvious safety hazards involved** – Traffic police officia

"Parents must also ensure proper safety measures like seat belts or harnesses are used. While it may not always be easy to find helmets for small children in local markets, many manufacturers and dealerships do sell certified helmets designed specifically for children. Many parents also worry that the weight of a standard or heavy helmet could cause neck strain or discomfort for a young child," Shreehari added.

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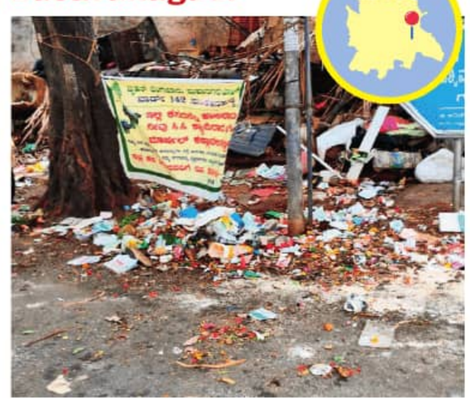
Traffic chaos

Horamavu

Horamavu Traffic Signal Junction and Horamavu Main Road continue to witness rampant traffic violations, with motorists driving on the wrong side, two-wheelers riding on footpaths and inadequate pedestrian crossing facilities endangering commuters and pedestrians daily.

Garbage menace

Basavanagudi



Despite warning signs and fines exceeding ₹500 for littering, an area near Bull Temple Road in Basavanagudi continues to be used for illegal dumping, with residents alleging garbage accumulates frequently and is removed only occasionally.

50% rebate in traffic fines till July 10

Vehicle owners with pending traffic violation cases in Bengaluru can avail a 50 per cent rebate on fines from June 21 to July 10 under a state government initiative. The concession applies to unpaid penalties recorded under the Traffic e-Challan system. Citizens can check violation details and make payments through the Karnataka State Police (KSP) app, BTP Astra app, Bengaluru One centres and traffic police stations using their vehicle registration number.

To facilitate payments, Bengaluru Traffic Police have opened special collection counters at 12 locations across the city, including Hennur Junction, Kundalahalli Junction, Mysore Bank Junction, Hebbal Junction, Jalahalli Cross and Gottigere Junction.

Authorities have urged motorists to clear pending dues within the rebate period. **–BMB**

Five years later, customs seek duty on Covid oxygen

Bengaluru activist left shocked as officials seek Rs 35.38 lakh from him, claiming oxygen concentrators imported during pandemic were wrongly classified

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More than 700 concentrators were distributed free across multiple states

Nearly five years after oxygen concentrators were imported into India during the devastating second wave of Covid-19, several individuals involved in those humanitarian efforts are receiving notices from Customs authorities demanding payment of substantial duties allegedly left unpaid at the time of import.

Among them is Bengaluru civic activist Vinay Kumar, who received a consultative letter from the Customs Audit Commissionerate, Mumbai, in March 2026. The communication contends that a consignment of oxygen concentrators imported in May 2021 was incorrectly classified under a tariff category that carried no customs duty during the pandemic.

Customs authorities have sought recovery of Rs 35.38 lakh, claiming the equipment should have been categorised as goods imported for personal use, which would have attracted customs duty and GST.

Issued on March 5, 2026, after a post-clearance audit, the letter states that oxygen concentrators were cleared through Mumbai's Air Cargo Complex under tariff heading 90192090 using a default Import Export Code for personal imports, without customs duty, surcharge or IGST.

However, Customs now argues the goods should have been assessed under tariff heading 9804 for personal imports. Under this classification, the consignment would attract 35% Basic Customs Duty, 10% Social Welfare Surcharge, and 28% IGST, creating a duty shortfall of Rs 35.38 lakh.

The department has asked Kumar to voluntarily pay the amount, along with applicable interest, within 15 days, or provide a detailed explanation as to why the amount should not be recovered. The letter also indicates that a formal show-cause notice could subsequently be issued under the Customs Act, 1962.

Imports occurred during severe oxygen shortages when the Union government had temporarily waived duties on oxygen-related medical equipment

He submitted a response to the consultative letter on March 18 along with supporting documents but has not received any acknowledgement or further communication from authorities since then, he added.

The imports took place during the peak of India's second Covid wave, when severe oxygen shortages were reported nationwide. To address the crisis, the Union government waived customs duties and health cess on oxygen-related equipment for three months and extended separate exemptions for personal-use oxygen equipment until July 31, 2021.

In May 2021, Kumar launched a public fundraising campaign to procure oxygen concentrators from Germany and the United States. Through the initiative, more than 700 concentrators were imported and distributed free of cost across Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and other states. Social media updates documented their deployment to hospitals, healthcare facilities, and patients. Kumar disputed Customs' claim that the imports were meant for personal use, stating the purpose of the consignment was clearly disclosed from the outset. He said detailed records were maintained throughout the operation, with every concentrator barcoded for traceability, and documentation exists showing their free distribution and donation.

One Reddit user reported receiving a show-cause notice regarding oxygen concentrators imported in 2021 and donated free of charge to public health institutions. According to the post, Customs authorities reclassified the devices as personal-use imports and sought approximately Rs 14 lakh in differential duty and penalties.

Kumar said Customs officials had questioned the exemption certificate requirement but maintained that the necessary documentation from the designated nodal officer had been submitted. A tax lawyer who reviewed the consultative letter advised that the matter remains unresolved, and further proceedings are possible if authorities are not satisfied.

While talking to Bangalore Mirror, Kumar said, "COVID brought out both the best and worst of people. While there were those who abandoned their parents, many risked their lives to save strangers. We were able to raise a massive amount through sheer magic — kindness from strangers across the world. We did not sleep for 48 hours," he said, noting that the present scenario has caused unnecessary anxiety among those involved in such efforts.

32 'Class E' lakes get clean-up boost

Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has directed officials to take urgent measures to improve water quality in 32 lakes classified under Class 'E' by the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) in its April 2026 report. Of the 182 lakes under city corporations, these 32 were found to have poor water quality, prompting Rao to order joint inspections by civic bodies and the Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) to identify issues and implement corrective measures.

Rao also instructed officials to stop sewage inflow into the K-100 stormwater drain, where contamination has been identified at 19 locations. Authorities have been asked to inspect illegal sewage connections, address overflowing sewer lines and curb coloured effluent discharge from dyeing units. He further directed regular water quality monitoring of K-100 and removal of encroachments over the drain near JC Road. City corporations and BWSSB have also been asked to review road restoration works and submit certified reports. **–BMB**

57 accused who skipped court nabbed

East Division Police have arrested 57 accused persons, who had been absconding after failing to appear before court proceedings in various criminal cases within its jurisdiction.

Special teams were constituted following directions of senior officers, and a coordinated operation was launched to trace individuals against whom non-bailable warrants had been issued by the Hon'ble Court. The accused had allegedly failed to attend trial proceedings despite repeated summons, prompting legal action under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

During the operation, police teams conducted checks across multiple limits including Halasuru, Indiranagar, Baiyappanahalli, JB Nagar, Shivajinagar, Commercial Street, Banaswadi, RM Nagar, Hennur, KG Halli and DJ Halli police stations. A total of 57 absconding accused were successfully apprehended.

Of them, 49 were booked under Section 269 BNS and eight under Section 209 BNS. All arrested persons were produced before the court, and further legal proceedings have been initiated. **–BMB**

Inter-caste marriage incentive stalls, thousands await promised government support

Despite approvals, years-long delays in fund disbursal leave eligible inter-caste couples struggling as application backlogs continue

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The State Government's flagship incentive scheme for inter-caste marriages appears to be losing its purpose as thousands of eligible couples continue to wait for financial assistance years after submitting their applications. Introduced to encourage social integration and support couples entering inter-caste marriages, the scheme offers a substantial cash incentive. However, mounting delays in fund release have left beneficiaries making repeated visits to Social Welfare Department offices, with many questioning whether the government has sufficient funds to honour its commitments.

Data from the Social Welfare Department for 2025-26 paints a worrying picture. The department received 5,612 applications under the inter-caste marriage incentive scheme across the state. Of these, authorities approved only 1,393 applications for the first instalment of assistance. However, just 30 applicants have received the first instalment so far, while 3,304 approved applications continue to await fund release. Another 859 applications remain incomplete and 26 have been rejected. The figures indicate that despite thousands of couples meeting eligibility requirements and completing the application process, only a small fraction of beneficiaries have received financial assistance.

Officials said the department processes applications on a first-come, first-served basis and gives priority to older applications. However, the pace of disbursement has raised concerns among applicants who have waited for years. Many couples who entered inter-caste marriages expecting government support now find themselves trapped in an endless cycle of follow-ups, documentation and uncertainty. Several applicants alleged that despite submitting all required documents through the online portal, they have received little clarity on when the funds will be released.

Wedding vows made, governmnet incentive still remains pending

For many newly married couples, the promised incentive remains out of reach, forcing repeated office visits and uncertainty while mounting pending applications raise concerns over funding and implementation gaps

The backlog extends beyond the current financial year. In 2024-25, the department received 5,137 applications seeking the incentive. While authorities approved a significant number of cases, only 815 applicants received the first instalment of the grant. Another 1,377 applications remained pending at the fund-release stage.

A similar trend emerged in 2023-24, when the department received 4,826 applications. Of these, 1,015 applicants received sanction for the first instalment, while thousands of others continued to wait. Another 592 applications remained pending. The recurring delays over several years have fuelled allegations that the scheme suffers from inadequate budgetary allocation despite continued demand.

Applicants and social activists argued that the incentive serves not only as financial assistance but also as a policy tool to promote social harmony and reduce caste barriers. They said delayed payments defeat the purpose of the programme and weaken confidence among couples who choose to marry across caste lines.

Under the scheme, couples in which a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe individual marries a person from another caste are eligible for financial assistance of Rs 5.5 lakh. The benefit includes Rs 3 lakh for the bride and Rs 2.5 lakh for the groom. Despite remaining one of the state's most significant social welfare initiatives, the growing backlog has left thousands of couples wondering when the promised support will finally reach them.

K'taka freezes crores, cybercriminals feel heat

Karnataka has emerged as one of the leading states in the country in tackling cyber fraud by successfully freezing a significant portion of money siphoned off by online fraudsters, Home, IT, Biotechnology and e-Governance Minister Priyank Kharge said on Friday.

During his visit to the Police Wireless Headquarters on M.G. Road in Bengaluru, Kharge reviewed cybercrime response systems and discussed measures with senior police officials to strengthen prevention mechanisms and improve fund recovery.

Officials said Karnataka Police have frozen 436 crore out of the 2,640 crore reported lost to cyber fraud, accounting for nearly 17 per cent of the total amount. Maharashtra tops the list with 548 crore frozen out of 3,203 crore in reported losses, placing Karnataka second in the country in terms of blocked cyber fraud funds.

Kharge said the introduction of a web-based complaint bot in 2025 and a WhatsApp-based complaint bot in 2026 has improved access to cybercrime reporting. Between January and May 2026, the cyber helpline received more than 10.33 lakh calls and registered 90,225 complaints.

During the period, victims lost around 807 crore to cyber fraud, while authorities froze 216 crore, nearly 27 per cent of the amount. Officials said dedicated bank follow-up teams, liaison officers and trained personnel on the I4C platform have helped speed up transaction blocking and fund recovery. The meeting was attended by senior police officers, including DGP Dr M A Saleem and ADGP (Communications and Logistics) S Murugan. **–BMB**

Bengaluru needs a fully empowered political owner accountable to its citizens; anything less is meaningless

SRIKANTH VISWANATHAN & SANTOSH NARGUND
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Recent news reports suggest that Krishna Byre Gowda, the newly appointed Minister for Bengaluru, is reluctant to take charge without control over the Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA) and Bengaluru Metropolitan Region Development Authority (BMRDA). These agencies may reportedly be retained under the Chief Minister's direct charge.

The very idea that a state minister should govern Bengaluru—or any other city in Karnataka or India—makes no sense. The municipality is meant to be the government of the city and the Mayor is supposed to be its executive head. The Mayor therefore needs to be in charge.

In practice, however, there is no single Metropolitan Mayor who can be held accountable for the affairs of Bengaluru, as the newly formed Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) is headed by the Chief Minister of the state. Across the world, successful metropolitan regions are typically led by empowered mayors, often directly elected and clearly accountable to citizens for outcomes. From Tokyo, Manila and Jakarta in Asia to Johannesburg in Africa, to Rio de Janeiro and Mexico City in Latin America, to New York, London and Paris, all have fully empowered directly elected Mayors (called governors in certain cases).

However, India's Mayors and local governments are weak by design. The Constitution of India was amended as a late afterthought in 1992–93 to empower India's urban local governments (the 74th CAA), but it was poorly drafted. Nothing prevented state governments from stepping up and empowering urban (and rural) local governments, given local governments are a state subject under the Constitution. But state governments, mainly Chief Ministers, have taken a narrow, self-defeating position and not decentralised powers and functions to local governments. Under the Greater Bengaluru Governance (GBG) Act, 2024 too, mayors of the five city corporations under the GBA are ceremonial. They do not have a five-year tenure nor powers to appoint their corporation commissioner, engineers and officials, or even to plan their areas.

As for the GBA itself, it is an unwieldy jamboree of 75 members headed not by a Metropolitan Mayor (like in the case of other comparable global cities cited above) but the Chief Minister of the state. The Mayors of the five city corporations are outnumbered by the 40-plus MLAs/MLCs and state government ministers, 10-plus MPs and Union ministers. They also share the table with dozens of unelected bureaucrats, including the city commissioners who should actually be reporting to them. This leaves the mayors of the constituent city corporations weak and subordinate to the state government. This is not what the 74th CAA envisaged. It envisaged the municipality as an autonomous local self-government. We continue to suffer the consequences of unimaginative design and drafting of the 74th CAA and subsequent political neglect of it at the Union and state levels.

The latest wrangle over keeping the planning agencies outside the Bengaluru Development Minister's remit—besides, of course, traffic, transport and public safety, which are governed by the Traffic Police, State Transport Department and City Police—further worsens the problem. Such a patchwork governance framework has led to liveability in Bengaluru becoming a casualty. For example, the erstwhile BBMP laid roads (rarely footpaths), which BWSSB and BESCOM would dig up because they did not follow unified, co-ordinated street-wise works and tenders. The BMTC would run buses, the BBMP would build bus stops, and the BTP would direct traffic. The BMRCL would run metros, and the State Transport Department was supposed to regulate autos and cabs. There was no single political owner nor even a bureaucrat wholly accountable for day-to-day outcomes experienced by citizens.

How does one expect a political leader to deliver without the necessary mandate to supervise and direct all agencies handling planning, financing, governance, infrastructure and services to citizens? How does one expect a city to deliver on liveability without proper coordination between its agencies? If Bengaluru is governed by a dozen-plus agencies, 75 leaders, including scores of bureaucrats, who exactly can citizens hold accountable? No single official, elected or otherwise, can be held accountable. Therefore, the status quo of poor liveability and lack of accountability for it is not likely to change under such a governance framework.

The GBG Act itself needs to be amended to provide for a fully empowered, preferably directly elected, Metropolitan Mayor. A good beginning would be to allow the Minister in charge of Bengaluru (at least a city MLA now) to be able to lead all departments and agencies that serve the city, in the interim. This minister indeed should assume responsibility to meaningfully devolve powers and functions to the mayors and councils of the five municipal corporations.

Garbage, traffic and potholes are symptoms of poor governance. Lack of an empowered mayor and council is the root cause. We as citizens of Bengaluru have shown remarkable civic leadership in mobilising for neighbourhood-level and sectoral causes. We need to mobilise for the cause that matters most—an empowered city government led by an empowered mayor. We, the citizens, need the power to vote back in a political owner that delivers, and vote out one that does not.

(Authors: Srikanth Viswanathan and Santosh Nargund are Chief Executive Officer and Director, Policy Engagement respectively at Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy. The views expressed are personal.)

For a breezy summer escapade

Easy fashion ideas for your next vacation

Looking forward to being unapologetically yourself this summer? Express yourself through fashion and style. The anticipation builds when you are all geared up to put your bags in place. There is a proverb saying preparation and packing your bags are the real fun of the whole trip, perhaps the real excitement comes from the confusion of which clothes to wear and which to avoid, which footwear should go with which outfits?

There's nothing like having fun putting together your outfits and expressing yourself in fashion. So, here are some of the outfits you can add to your summer collection.

1. White Long Dresses

All time summer essential, there's no better way to wear summer than with a white dress that swishes in the wind. Timeless, lightweight, and chic, this is something you'll never tire of, whether at an oceanside town or a hill station coffee shop.

Pair with:

- Chunky shoes for an edgy look
- Strap on sandals for an alluring femininity
- Woven totes or mini sling bags
- Delicate gold accessories

2. Fringe Skirt

The fringe skirt will add a fun and luxurious touch to your summer wardrobe. You can wear these fit on days that call for ease and style.

Pair With:

- Cropped tops made from light material or shirt tucked in at the waist
- Sunglasses with an oversized frame
- Structured purse or small crossbody bag
- Neutrally coloured flat shoes

3. Desi Fusion Style

A fashion statement of summer is the fusion between classic elements and modern silhouette. You can think of Indian inspired embroidery designs on tops thats simple or with a glam combined with fashionable denim jeans or ethnic prints done with a modern twist.

Pair With:

- Layered oxidized or gold jewelry pieces
- Shimmer base makeup
- Earrings and bangles
- A sash or scarf tied in a fashionable way

4. Co-ord Sets

If you want an outfit that requires zero styling efforts for your vacation, then opt for co-ord sets. All you need to do is pair matching top and bottom pieces to get an effortless hassle free look.

Pair With:

- Linen co-ords for a cooling experience
- Pastel co-ords for a soothing feel
- Printed/co-ordinating co-ords for some playfulness

5. Flowy Maxi Skirts & Crop Tops

Maxi skirts are made to perfection for holiday wear especially in sunny weather if you wish to go for relaxing vocational vibes. They flow well and are light enough to dress up or dress down as you please.

Pair With:

- Tight fitting crop tops or tight shirts
- Scarves or headbands
- Sandals or espadrilles
- Multiple necklaces

—Khundom Roshila, Femina

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BENGALURU SPEAKS

and gets heard on this page

STORY BEHIND THE PHOTO

FOREST RUNNER SPOTTED

Our reader shares a captivating image of a Grey Francolin foraging deep within the Gopinatham forest. Known for their loud, ringing calls, these ground-dwelling birds are remarkably swift runners, often choosing to dart through dense undergrowth rather than take flight when startled. Captured in its natural habitat, the photograph offers a glimpse into the fascinating behaviour of one of the forest's most elusive residents.

The picture was clicked by reader **NJ Ravi Chander**

If you have a picture and a story to share, send us the picture with your name and number at **mybangaloremirror@timesofindia.com**

Ghost garbage vehicles exposed as civic audit uncovers massive fraud

Surprise inspections reveal manipulated attendance records, missing auto-tippers, safety lapses, and weak oversight disrupting waste collection

A surprise inspection by Bengaluru North City Corporation officials uncovered widespread irregularities in the city's door-to-door garbage collection system, with several auto-tippers allegedly marked as present and operational despite being absent from the field.

The findings emerged after repeated complaints from residents about irregular waste collection services. Acting on the complaints, Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar constituted four inspection teams to conduct early-morning checks at auto-tipper marshalling points across multiple wards. The inspections exposed major gaps in monitoring mechanisms and alleged misuse of technology in the city's solid waste management network.

During an inspection near Wheeler Town flyover in Ward 59, the Commissioner and Deputy General Manager Rashmi found significant discrepancies between actual vehicle attendance and records uploaded through the monitoring application. Of the 32 auto-tippers assigned to the ward, only a few were physically present, while the app showed 24 vehicles as operational. Officials found that three vehicles had fake attendance marks, while several others remained completely absent. Inspections conducted between 5.56 am and 7am revealed that many vehicles shown as active had never reported to the marshalling point.

The team also found that several vehicles operating on the ground lacked helper staff, while sanitation workers did not have mandatory safety gloves. Following the findings, the Commissioner directed officials to immediately dismiss the ward marshal responsible for monitoring attendance. Similar irregularities surfaced in other wards. A team led by Joint Commissioner Mohammed Nayeem Momin inspected the marshalling point in Ward 49 and found only 10 of the 25 assigned auto-tippers present, although attendance records showed 23 vehicles as operational. In Ward 27, a team led by Additional Commissioner (Revenue) Pallavi found only 17 of the 35 assigned vehicles on site. Another inspection in Ward 24, led by AGM Mamatha, revealed that just 18 of 31 vehicles were present despite attendance records indicating much higher participation.

Residents' complaints triggered dawn inspections that uncovered vehicles existing only on paper, exposing accountability gaps and raising concerns over whether daily waste collection promises are reaching households

Officials said the inspections pointed to manipulation of attendance systems to falsely project higher operational efficiency. Commissioner Sunil Kumar warned that negligence, dereliction of duty and misuse of attendance systems would not be tolerated in public service.

— BMB

Investigators detected misuse of QR-based attendance systems, raising concerns over disruptions in door-to-door garbage collection services

DID YOU KNOW?

Honeybee queens and worker bees begin life the same way both hatch from ordinary fertilised female eggs. For decades, scientists believed that a larva became a queen solely because worker bees fed it royal jelly, a nutrient-rich substance. However, new research published in Nature suggests that diet alone does not determine a bee's destiny. Researchers found that the special wax chamber built for future queens plays a crucial role in their development. Unlike the hexagonal cells used for workers, queen cells resemble hanging peanut shells and possess unique physical and chemical properties. The wax is softer, melts at a higher temperature and emits a distinct chemical scent, creating what scientists describe as a "smart incubator." The softer walls may allow larvae more room to grow, while the wax's scent could trigger developmental changes. Experiments showed that larvae fed royal jelly but raised in worker-cell wax developed poorly and experienced higher mortality rates. Scientists also discovered that young worker bees constructing queen cells heat their bodies above 39°C to mould the specialised wax. The findings challenge the long-held belief that nutrition alone creates queens, highlighting the importance of both a royal diet and a royal home.

— Reuters

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PIB fact check debunks fake 'Operation Sindoor 2.0' letter purportedly issued by Defence Secretary

The Claim: A viral letter allegedly issued by Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh claimed the government was preparing for "Operation Sindoor 2.0" under the Prime Minister's directive, outlining strategic intentions and military preparations.
Fact: PIB Fact Check confirmed the letter was completely fake. Neither Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh nor the Ministry of Defence issued any such communication regarding "Operation Sindoor 2.0".

The Press Information Bureau's (PIB) Fact Check unit on Wednesday dismissed as fake a letter circulating on social media that falsely claimed to have been issued by Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh regarding preparations for "Operation Sindoor 2.0". In a post on X, PIB Fact Check cautioned the public against falling for misinformation and clarified that neither the Defence Secretary nor the Ministry of Defence had issued any such communication.

"Do not fall for fake news!" PIB Fact Check said in its post. The fact-checking unit stated that a letter allegedly issued by Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh was being widely circulated online, claiming to outline preparations for "Operation Sindoor 2.0".

"This letter is Fake. Neither the Defence Secretary nor the Defence Ministry has issued any such letter," the post said. PIB Fact Check also shared an image of the purported document, which carried the title, "Subject: Operation Sindoor 2.0; Prime Minister's Directive, Strategic Intent." The agency clarified that the document was fabricated and had no connection with the Ministry of Defence or any official government communication. Urging citizens to remain vigilant, the fact-checking unit advised people to verify information through official channels before sharing it on social media.

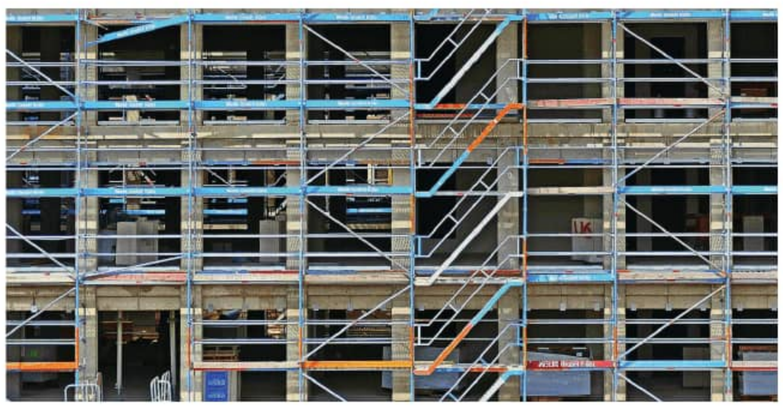
"Beware of fake news circulating online and always depend on reliable official sources for verified information," PIB Fact Check said, adding, "Report suspicious content related to the Government of India to @PIBFactCheck." The clarification comes amid continued efforts by government agencies to counter misinformation and prevent the spread of unverified claims on digital platforms. Earlier, PIB Fact Check had debunked another set of viral social media claims alleging that Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju and Union Minister of State for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal were visiting London along with judges and were participating in a badminton event there.

Fake letter attributed to the Defence Ministry circulating online
FAKE
@PIBFactCheck /PIBFactCheck t.me/PIB_FactCheck

Addressing the claims on X, the fact-checking unit categorically stated that the reports were false and that neither Rijiju nor Meghwal was in London. "This claim is fake. Minister Kiren Rijiju and Union Minister of State for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal are not visiting London," PIB Fact Check said. The agency further clarified that photographs accompanying the viral posts were being misrepresented. According to PIB Fact Check, the images were not taken in London but during the All India Judges' Badminton Championship held at Thyagaraj Stadium in New Delhi in November 2025. Reiterating its appeal to citizens, PIB Fact Check urged people not to share misleading or unverified content and encouraged them to report suspicious photos, videos, or messages related to the Government of India for verification through official channels.

— IANS

Nelamangala emerges as North Bengaluru's next realty hotspot



Once seen as a peripheral town, Nelamangala is fast transforming into one of North Bengaluru's most sought-after real estate destinations, driven by major infrastructure projects, industrial growth and upcoming transit connectivity. Located around 20 km from the city centre and strategically positioned on the Bengaluru-Tumakuru Highway, the area is attracting investors looking for premium plots and long-term appreciation. Ravi Gowda, a realtor, said, "Localities such as Mylanahalli, close to both the Nelamangala railway station and bus stand, are witnessing growing demand, with developers pitching them as high-potential investment zones. The proposed metro extension towards Dabaspet, along with connectivity through the Outer Ring Road, Satellite Town Ring Road and Peripheral Ring Road, is expected to further boost the region's appeal."

Realtors say that Nelamangala's inclusion among Bengaluru's proposed satellite towns has accelerated development. The presence of industrial clusters, logistics parks and manufacturing units is creating jobs and driving housing demand. "Educational institutions, hospitals, shopping hubs and proximity to Kempegowda International Airport add to its residential appeal. With industries increasingly moving beyond expensive zones such as Peenya, real estate experts believe Nelamangala is well placed to emerge as Bengaluru's next growth corridor, making it an attractive option for both homebuyers and investors," Somu Gowda, a realtor, added. **BMB**

Pink Line deadline set for August 2026

Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byregowda has directed BMRCL to commission the 7.5-km Kalena Agrahara-Tavarekere stretch of the Pink Line, comprising six stations, by August 15, 2026, subject to statutory clearances and safety approvals. The remaining 12 underground stations on the corridor are targeted for completion by March 2027. The minister has also asked BMRCL to begin trial runs on the KR Puram-Marathahalli section of the Blue Line by October 2026. While the 26-km Hebbal-Kempegowda International Airport stretch is expected to open by June 2027, the remaining KR Puram-Hebbal section is slated for commissioning by December 2027. With these additions, Bengaluru's operational Metro network, currently spanning 96 km, is projected to expand to nearly 175 km by March 2028. The enhanced connectivity is expected to improve urban mobility, reduce travel times and boost transit-oriented development, providing a significant fillip to residential and commercial real estate growth along key Metro corridors across the city. **BMB**

Shift to the suburbs

Soaring rents in India's major metros are pushing tenants away from city centres and towards suburban neighbourhoods that offer better affordability, larger homes and improved connectivity.

According to Magicbricks' January-March 2026 report, residential rents across the country rose 14% year-on-year and 2% quarter-on-quarter, even as overall rental demand grew by just 0.6%, indicating growing affordability concerns among urban residents.

Cities such as Bengaluru, Delhi-NCR, Hyderabad and Mumbai are witnessing a sharp rise in demand for homes in peripheral areas, driven by expanding metro networks, expressways, IT hubs and social infrastructure. Real estate experts say middle-class families and young professionals are increasingly choosing suburbs over traditional city centres, where rents have surged significantly in recent years. Areas along emerging corridors such as Dwarka Expressway, Southern Peripheral Road and New Gurugram have seen strong growth in both housing demand and supply. **BMB**

Big relief for Bengaluru homebuyers

In a major boost for homebuyers and homeowners, the State Government has announced a one-time relaxation of Occupancy Certificate (OC) requirements for obtaining electricity connections in eligible residential buildings within the Greater Bengaluru Authority limits.

Earlier, the exemption was available only for residential buildings constructed on plots up to 1,200 sq ft with a ground-plus-two or stilt-plus-three floor configuration. Under the revised order, the benefit has been significantly expanded to cover residential buildings built on plots of up to 2,400 sq ft, including a permissible variation of 20 per cent.

The relaxation has also been extended to larger structures, including ground-plus-three residential buildings and stilt parking plus four-floor residential buildings.

The move is expected to benefit thousands of middle-class property owners who have faced delays in securing electricity connections due to OC-related hurdles. To prevent misuse, power distribution companies will conduct site inspections, verify that the building is completed and falls within the prescribed norms, and maintain photographic records before granting connections. The one-time concession will be available only to property owners who submitted applications for electricity connections on or before May 31, 2026. **BMB**

LoA issued for 21-km PRR stretch

The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has issued a Letter of Acceptance (LoA) to Shankaranarayana Construction (SNC) for Package 1 of the Bengaluru Business Corridor (Peripheral Ring Road) project. The package involves constructing a 21-km, eight-lane expressway connecting Madavara on Tumakuru Road near the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre (BIEC) to old Ballari Road close to Kempegowda International Airport. The project has an estimated cost of ₹3,348.05 crore.

The tender for the project was floated in April, with bids closing on May 4. Technical and financial bids opened on May 6 and May 11 respectively. The project will execute under the Design, Build, Operate, Maintain and Transfer (DBOMT) model, under which the contractor will operate and maintain the road for 10 years after construction. The contractor has 36 months to complete the work. Bengaluru Business Corridor Chairman LK Atheeq said the acceptance letter has been issued and construction on the strategic airport-bound corridor is expected to commence shortly. **BMB**

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Goalie error helps Mexico edge past South Korea

Co-host become first team to qualify for Round of 32 after narrow win

Luis Romo punished a critical 50th-minute error by goalkeeper Kim Seung-gyu, and co-host Mexico's historical dominance of South Korea at the World Cup continued with a 1-0 victory in Zapopan, Mexico, on Thursday to win Group A.

Raul Rangel made a spectacular late double-save to keep Mexico's second clean sheet and secure the top group spot, one that guarantees Mexico will play a round-of-32 match and a potential round-of-16 fixture in Mexico City.

Both heroes for Mexico (2-0-0, 6 points) were starring in the venue where they play their club football for CD Guadalajara. Their actions sealed El Tri's third World Cup victory in as many appearances against South Korea.

South Korea (1-1-0, 3 points) still would finish second in the group with a win in their finale against South Africa (0-1-1, 1 point), regardless of how Mexico performs against Czech Republic (0-1-1, 1 point).

South Korea all-time caps leader Son Heung-min didn't go the whole 90 minutes for a second consecutive match, with the attacker departing before the hour mark. Romo's finish -- only his fourth international goal -- could not have been simpler after Seung-gyu crashed into a teammate while trying to make a catch and spilled the ball near the penalty spot.

Romo connected on the first bounce, stabbing it with his right foot into an open goal to send a crowd into delight after the fans had been critical of their side not long before.

Seung-gyu made some measure of amends, denying Raul Jimenez with a strong stop in the 75th minute at the near post and making a sprawling denial of Obed Vargas in the 85th.

Shortly after, the rarely tested Rangel was forced into an exceptional sequence, first denying Cho Gue-sung's header at the back post and then maintaining his position just long enough to deny Yang Hyun-jun's second effort.

It was a late outburst during a match that took time to get going.

Mexico's Julian Quinones had the only effort on target before the half, with Seung-gyu denying his glancing header in the 20th minute.

By halftime, the home crowd had tired of Mexico's passiveness and booed the co-hosts off the pitch. **-Reuters**

Players of Mexico celebrate their first goal

Qatar unravel, lose 6-0 to Canada

Qatar's World Cup defeat to Canada on Thursday went so awry that goalkeeper Mahmoud Abunada appeared to break down in tears after the final whistle, receiving comfort from a teammate and Canada's Jacob Schaffelburg.

"It was a tough match, because everything that could go wrong, did go wrong," coach Julen Lopetegui said. "That's how football is sometimes."

Qatar's Mahmoud Abunada looks dejected after the match

Qatar played two men down for most of the second half after a pair of red cards and went on to lose 6-0, the worst defeat in the Persian Gulf country's short World Cup history. Qatar debuted in the tournament as the host in 2022 and lost 2-0 to Ecuador, 3-1 to Senegal and 2-0 to the Netherlands.

The second red card was issued to midfielder Assim Madibo, who tackled Canada's Ismael Kone from behind, breaking Kone's lower left leg. Kone was stretchered off the field and taken to a hospital for surgery.

Kone's replacement, Nathan Saliba, buried a 20-yard free kick in the 64th minute for Canada's fourth goal.

Controlling rebounds was a struggle for the Qatari defenders, who could not clear the ball after two of Abunada's saves. Canada had 10 shots on goal while Qatar had none. **-PTI**

HIGHLIGHTS

Rape case: Morocco captain to stand trial

Morocco captain and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) star Achraf Hakimi, set to join the national side ahead of their FIFA World Cup clash against Scotland on Friday, has been ordered to stand trial for a rape charge before a French criminal court, reported Goal.com.

The case stems from an incident back in February 2023, when a young woman reported of a sexual assault at the PSG star's residence in Boulogne-Billancourt. After a three-year inquiry, the prosecution requested a trial before the final judicial referral was confirmed by the appeals court. Legal authorities in Hauts-de-Seine ruled that the investigation yielded enough evidence against the 27-year-old footballer to proceed directly to a full criminal trial. "The court looked me in the eye and said: 'If you were not famous, there would never have been a case.' I chose to remain silent for years..." Hakimi said in a social media post. **-ANI**

Iran to lodge plaint against travel rules

Iran plans to lodge a complaint with football's world governing body FIFA over travel restrictions its team is facing in the U.S. at the World Cup. Due to uncertainty over visas and the conflict with the U.S., the Iranian team are commuting from their tournament base in co-host Mexico for their three group games in the U.S. U.S. authorities require them to enter within 24 hours of a match and leave the same day, leading team coach Amir Ghalenoei to say Iran were the "most oppressed" team in the tournament. "The Football Federation of Iran believes these restrictions are inconsistent with the principles of providing equal conditions for participating teams and may affect their technical preparation," the federation said in a statement on Friday announcing its protest to FIFA. Neither FIFA nor the U.S. Department of Homeland Security responded to Reuters for comment. **-Reuters**

Rescue dog Osito steals hearts at the World Cup, one bike ride at a time

As World Cup fever sweeps Mexico City, one of the tournament's biggest fan favorites isn't a player, coach or official mascot. Joining Merlin the duck in the pantheon of heart-stealers is Osito, an 8-year-old rescue poodle mix who's become an unlikely sensation after arriving at Mexico's opening match perched on the back of a cargo bicycle, dressed in a Mexico jersey, sunglasses and a cap.

As thousands of fans streamed toward the stadium last week for the tournament opener, many stopped to snap photos, pet the dog and post videos online.

Within hours, Osito was appearing on international broadcasts and spreading across social media, transforming the bicycle-riding dog into one of the World Cup's most charming viral stars.

For his owner, Jorge Rangel, the attention is less about internet fame than the companionship he shares with the dog who accompanies him almost everywhere. For the past two years, Osito has joined Rangel on his daily rounds delivering household products across Mexico City.

"More than a dog, he's my daily companion," Rangel, 50, said.

They travel together on a specially adapted cargo bicycle, where Osito sits calmly in a back compartment, greeting passersby and drawing smiles from strangers.

The arrangement began by chance. One day, Rangel placed the dog in a delivery box attached to his bicycle and took him for a short ride. Osito seemed to enjoy it. Over time, Rangel added cushions, adjusted the setup and gradually brought him along on longer trips through the city. Before long, the pair became a familiar sight.

Now, children rush over to greet Osito, strangers stop to take photographs and some initially mistake him for a stuffed animal because he sits so still, often dressed in one of his many outfits.

"He has a very gentle temperament. Everybody wants to meet him," Rangel said.

When the World Cup arrived, Rangel saw an opportunity to introduce Osito - whose name means "little bear" - to an even larger audience.

A devoted soccer fan, he spent weeks preparing for the tournament, gathering accessories and adapting a pair of sunglasses to fit the dog. He dressed Osito in a national team jersey and decorated the bicycle, hoping to stand out among the crowds heading to the stadium.

"It exceeded all my expectations," Rangel said of the response.

What appears to resonate most with fans is not the costume or the viral fame, but the relationship between the man and the dog. Rangel adopted Osito years ago, during a difficult period in his life, and describes him as an emotional lifeline. "I didn't know what it meant to love an animal until Osito came into my life," Rangel said. **-AP**

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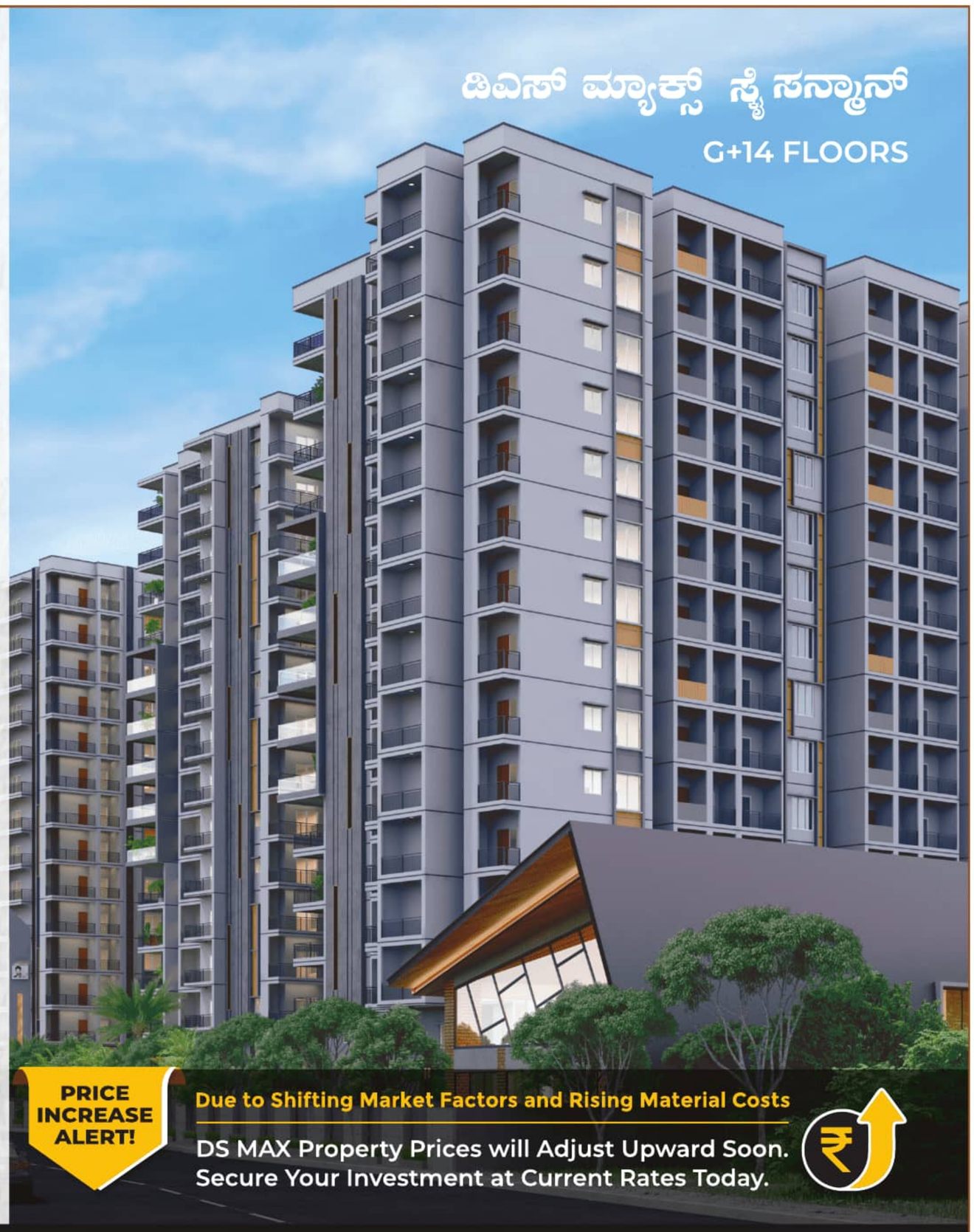

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Residential JDA disputes face jurisdiction test

The Karnataka High Court has referred to a larger bench the question of whether disputes arising from Joint Development Agreements (JDAs) involving residential projects can be treated as "commercial disputes" under the Commercial Courts Act, 2015.

While one line of judgments held that disputes relating to residential development projects could fall within the ambit of commercial disputes, another took the view that agreements concerning residential apartment projects did not necessarily qualify for adjudication before commercial courts.

The case before the Court concerned a dispute arising from a JDA executed for the development of a residential apartment project in Bengaluru. During the proceedings, the Court examined earlier rulings that reached differing conclusions on whether such agreements amounted to commercial transactions under Section 2(1)(c) of the Commercial Courts Act.

One judgment held that a JDA for developing residential sites constituted a commercial venture because it involved construction and development activities undertaken for mutual gain. Another concluded that a dispute relating to a residential apartment project was not a commercial dispute and therefore could not be entertained by a Commercial Court.

Observing that these conflicting interpretations created uncertainty regarding the jurisdiction of commercial courts, the Single Judge referred the issue for determination by a larger bench. .

— BMB

Premium FAR survives property rights challenge

The Karnataka High Court has upheld the State government's Premium Floor Area Ratio (FAR) scheme, ruling that it does not infringe the constitutional right to property and is a valid component of the State's urban planning framework. The Court dismissed petitions filed by landowners and holders of Transferable Development Rights (TDRs) who had challenged the policy.

The challenge arose from the introduction of Premium FAR under Section 18B of the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, 1961. Petitioners whose lands had been acquired for public purposes and who received TDRs instead of monetary compensation argued that allowing developers to obtain additional building rights directly from the government on payment of a fee diluted the value of TDRs and reduced demand for them.

The petitioners also sought to invalidate notifications issued in 2025 implementing the Premium FAR regime, contending that they were arbitrary, beyond the powers granted by the parent legislation, and violated Article 300A of the Constitution.

Justice MI Arun rejected these arguments, holding that Premium FAR and TDR are complementary mechanisms that enable construction beyond the ordinarily permissible floor area ratio. The Court observed that TDR retains significance because the highest permissible FAR in Bengaluru can still be achieved only by combining Premium FAR with TDR.

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, NITEESHA GRANTAKOTE RAMESHKUMAR S/o Nagaraja Ramesh Kumar aged about 18 years R/At Flat No. 305,3rd Floor,Tirumala Homes, Kodipalya Main Rd,Kengeri, B'luru-560060 have changed my name to NITEESHA GRANDIKOTA RAMESH KUMAR vide affidavit dtd:17/06/2026 sworn before notary Uday Kumar K, B'luru.

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I ASHWINI DEVARAJ, W/o K.N. Ajit Simha, aged 51 years, R/at No.170/A Preethi Nakshatra, A7, 5th Main, Ist Phase, 1st Stage, Manjunathanagar, Bangalore 560010 do hear by declare that my correct name is ASHWINI DEVARAJ, but in my passport my name is shown as ASHWINI AJIT SIMHA instead of ASHWINI DEVARAJ, hence I would like to change my name as ASHWINI DEVARAJ, Vide affidavit dated 10th June 2026, sworn before Advocate and Notary PUTTARAMAIAH at Bangalore.

I, SYEDA RESHMA JAINAB, R/a. 3159, Budikote Road, Bangarpet, KGF Kolar-563114. in my Children Education and other documents my name was mention as RESHMA ZAINAB, I, further state that both name i.e. SYEDA RESHMA JAINAB and RESHMA ZAINAB. the both name belongs to me only. Vide affidavit, dated 17/06/2026 Sworn before Notary: Meer Hassan Bangalore

I, PRIYA PRAMOD NANDAGAWALI D/o Shaik Moulali, R/o 20/1a-4-60/2, Gadham Rasaiah Nagar, Kothur Revenue Sabwad Road No 3, Andhra Pradesh-524004. I have changed my name to SHAIK SADIQUNNISA vide affidavit dated: 06/06/2026 Before Notary C.Sharada, Bengaluru.

I, Bheemesh Sagar R/o.No 11-9-52,Bresthwar pet, Raichur 584101. Karnataka have changed my name to Bheemesh Sagar.Y for all purposes.

I Rajendra Prasad R/o No 15 2nd floor 7th Cross Ganapathy Nagar Blore-26 Have Changed My Name To Rajendra Prasad Ananthappa

I, MAHABOOB SAHEB (Old Name) Resident of No. 1/1, 9th Main Road, 17th Cross, Padarayanapura, Bengaluru-560026 have changed my name to MAHABOOB PASHA (New Name) vide affidavit dated: 11/6/2026 Before Notary H.S.Sakalesh Aradhya Bangalore.

I, GIRISH, Residing At Flat No. A-808, A Block, Brigade 7 Gardens Apt, Sy 37/1, Uttarahalli, Subramanyapura, Bangalore - 560061, have changed my name to GIRISH NAKOD, vide affidavit dated 17/06/2026, sworn before notary Venkataraju H G, Bangalore.

I, TASNEEM SHAIKH W/o. Nasir Pasha, R/a No16/1, 2nd Flr, Ahmed Sait Rd,Mosque Rd, Frazer Town Bengaluru-05, I, have Changed my minor son name will be change from SYED ZAHEED to SYED TALHA, Vide affidavit dated 16/06/2026 Sworn before Notary R Basavaraja Bangalore

I, MOHAMMED TAHER, R/a.#108,3rd Floor 5th Cross, Chandni Chowk Road, Shivajinagar Bangalore-51. I, have Changed my name to MOHAMED TAHER vide affidavit dated 09/06/2026 Sworn before Notary G Dayananda Bangalore

I, KUMAR SWAMI, Residing at No. E/4/69/6, Peth Ammapur Tq, Shorapur, Yadgir – 585224, have changed my name to GUDDADAGI KUMARSWAMY, vide affidavit dated 08/06/2026, sworn before notary Venkataraju H G, Bangalore.

I, RAHMATULLA SHARIFF & RAHAMATHULLA SHARIEF, R/a. No.3227,Kumbar Road, Bangarpet-563114. I, have changed my name to RAHAMATHULLA SHARIFF, Vide affidavit dated 18/06/2026 Sworn before Notary Meer Hassan Bangalore

I, SRINIVASA, S/o N R Srinivas, R/o 107, Niduvalli, Chikkamangaluru, Karnataka-577182. I have changed my name to NIKHIL KUMAR S vide affidavit dated: 06/06/2026 Before Notary C.Sharada, Bengaluru.

I, RAVIKUMARA S M, S/o Marigowda, R/o No. 3153, 9th Cross, C Block, Gayathri Nagar, Bangalore North Bengaluru - 560021, Karnataka have changed my name to RAVIKUMAR SRIRAMANAHALLY MARIGOWDA for all purposes.

I, MEHAK PRAFULL SANCHETI, Residing at No 111, 3rd Main, 4th Block, Rajajinagar, Bangalore-560010, Have changed my name to MEHAK PRAFULL vide affidavit dated 18/06/2026 sworn before Notary Aravind Patil G.G Bangalore

I, Megha Yelkur W/o Vasantha Kumar Huligi R/o No 22 Krupanidhi, 2nd Floor, Subramanyapura Road, Churuch Cross Road Uttarahalli Bengaluru- 560061 have changed my name to Megha Huligi for all purposes

I, Rekha Huligi W/o Bharath Balakundi (Late) No 22 Krupanidhi, 1st Floor, Subramanyapura Road, Church Cross Road Uttarahalli, Bengaluru- 560061 have changed my name to Rekha Balakundi for all purposes

I, Mubeen Taj Mohammed Ali W/o Akbar Ali R/o #37 1st Floor, 4th Cross Sonnathammanahalli T C Palya K R Puram B'luru-560016 have changed my name to Mubeen Taj for all purposes.

I, Aaditya Udayan Shah R/o F102 Nishant Darpan Apt Nehrunagar MN RD Seshadripuram Blore-20 Have Changed My Name To Aaditya Shah

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Pushpa 2 screening stampede case
Actor Allu Arjun has received a summons from the Nampally Court in Hyderabad in connection with the Sandhya Theatre stampede case and has been directed to appear in person on June 22 for a hearing

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'I AM OLDER THAN YOU'

Line that ends all arguments between Shahid and Ishaan

Neelima Azeem raised both Shahid Kapoor and Ishaan Khatter alone, even though the two brothers are 15 years apart in age. She gave up her dreams of dancing and acting to earn money and care for her sons. Ishaan recently talked about this in an interview, sharing how his mother always put her children before her own dreams.

Talking to Lilly Singh, Ishaan shared that his mother started dancing professionally at age 9, learning under the great Pandit Birju Maharaj. She was so talented that by age 14, her picture appeared on a postage stamp, which was a big deal. Ishaan also said that growing up, he saw his mother play the role of both his mom and dad while handling everything else by herself. "In many ways, I saw my mother double up throughout my childhood. I also grew up with an elder brother who is 15 years older than me, so he was, in many ways, a parental figure. It is a very interesting relationship again, where we are more like pals than brothers, but there will always be a line of respect. He has changed my diapers, so every argument ends with, 'I am older than you,'" he said.

Neelima had Shahid when she was 21 with her first husband Pankaj Kapur, and had Ishaan when she was 36 with her second husband Rajesh Khatter. Ishaan talked about what it was like to have her as a mother and said, "Just watching mom navigate every phase of her life, trying to do her best and also being a very liberal kind of parent where… She had me when she was about 36, she had my brother when she was 21-22, so they were like friends. She had me a little later, but she still maintained that vibe and friendship with me where I felt I could share anything with her and I didn't have to hesitate. And that I think has contributed to the person I became in many ways. I am just glad I had a parent I didn't need to hide from or lie to."

— ETimes

'Best birthday week'

As Natalie Portman turned 45, the Hollywood star reflected on her Italian holiday and called it her "best birthday week ever".

Portman shared a string of pictures from her getaway, which also included the yummy food she gorged on during her holiday.

She wrote: "The best birthday week ever–thanks for all the birthday wishes and to Italy for being the greatest. And if you look closely, in pic 12 you can see Venus and Jupiter almost touching."

On the work front, Portman, who was born in Jerusalem, will be seen sharing screen space with actor Jonathan Bailey in 'Pumping Black', a psychological thriller.

The film is set in the competitive and cutthroat world of professional cycling. The feature will be directed by Mimi Cave, best known for directing 2022 horror 'Fresh' starring Daisy Edgar-Jones and Sebastian Stan, and 2025 comedy-mystery film 'Holland', starring Nicole Kidman. Cave will direct from a screenplay by Haley Hope Bartels.

'Pumping Black' follows cyclist Taylor Mace, who at 35-years-old is finding himself aging out of the sport, reports variety.com.

Portman has had a prolific screen career from her teenage years and has been feted with receiving multiple accolades, including an Academy Award, a BAFTA Award, and two Golden Globe Awards.

She began her acting career at twelve, starring as the young protegee of a hitman in Léon: The Professional in 1994. She gained international recognition for her role as Padme Amidala in Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace.

— IANS

True picture of Sandalwood

R Sharath Krishna has pulled off dual roles of directing and playing the lead in this movie. Perhaps based on the struggles and experiences of prospective actors, he selected the right script for the right movie that is made at the right time – when Kannada film industry is passing through a lean patch. Most Kannada movies, despite backing by well-known actors, are being withdrawn from screening within a week or a few days.

The director has successfully narrated how a few lecherous producers try to exploit prospective actresses and how nepotism and bias ruin the prospects of newcomers, who want to become somebody in Sandalwood. The movie also focuses on the struggles of debutant directors.

The movie is about Shivu (R Sharath Krishna), an auto rickshaw driver, who is ever ready to help others in need. At this juncture, the director introduces Sneha (Reshma Lingarajappa) who aspires to become an actress in the Kannada film industry. She has her own problems including an ailing mother. She meets Shivu and narrates how a producer misbehaved with her. They become friends and Sneha decides to confess her affection to him. At this juncture, Shivu's ex-girlfriend Swathi (Shilpa Shivakumar) appears on the scene and Sneha mistakes Shivu. You have to watch the movie to know what happens to Shivu and Sneha.

As far as performances of actors are concerned, Sharath Krishna is very good at dancing. He needs to hone his acting skills to portray emotional vulnerability and romantic connection. However, a few dialogues, particularly in a scene where a couple get into the protagonist's auto rickshaw, look incongruous. Huli Karthik has nothing to do except delivering a few dialogues. Reshma Lingarajappa's makeup was not up to the mark. Bala Rajwadi is convincing as an egoistic movie producer.

Music director Paul Alex has scored lilting and foot-tapping music. The movie would have been a good entertainer had the director reduced its runtime by 15 to 25 minutes.

All in all, the movie is worth watching for mass audiences.

—Y Maheswara Reddy

DODMANSA
2.5 RATING ★★½☆☆
- **DIRECTOR** R Sharath Krishna
- **ACTORS** R Sharath Krishna, Reshma Lingarajappa, Huli Karthik, Bala Rajwadi, and Shilpa Shivakumar
- **CERTIFICATION** U/A
- **DURATION** 143 minutes

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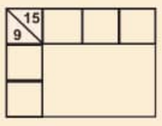
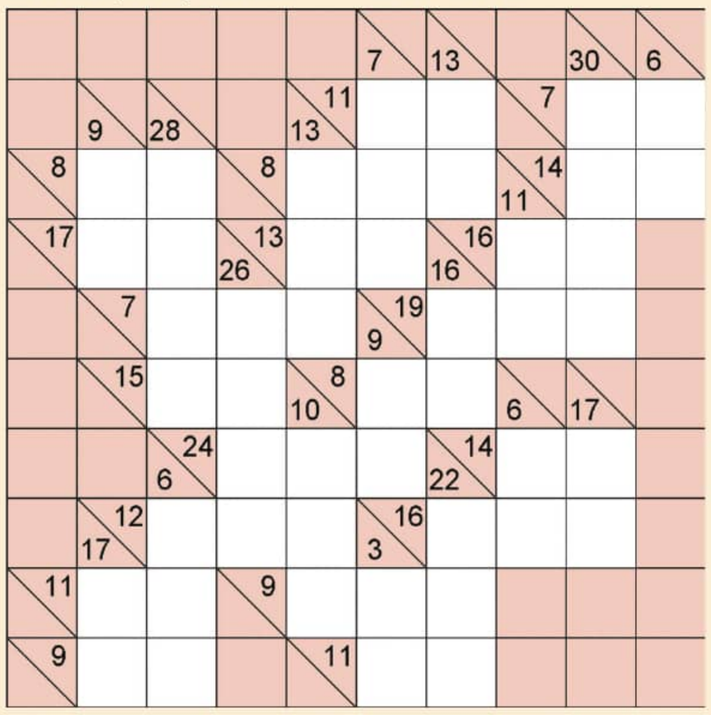
Kakuro

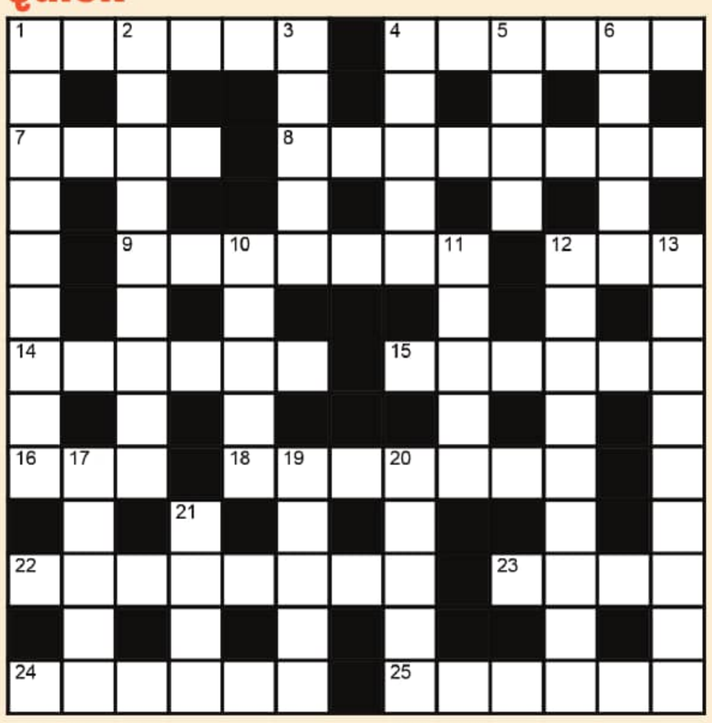
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 I in VIBGYOR (6)
4 Cooking instructions (6)
7 Vogue competitor (4)
8 Tipu Sultan's father (5,3)
9 Soft suede leather (7)
12 Inquire of (3)
14 Errands or tasks (6)
15 The human soul or spirit (6)
16 L in L.A. the famous city ? (3)
18 More silly or inane (7)
22 Able to read (8)
23 Branch (4)
24 Escargots (6)
25 Fastidious and pretty (6)

DOWN

1 Corresponding exactly in every respect (9)
2 Yummy (9)
3 Irish alphabet (5)
4 Spoke lines on the wheel? (5)
5 Milk byproduct (4)
6 ___ apart : as different as chalk and cheese? (5)
10 In front (5)
11 Japanese dish (5)
12 Concertina (9)
13 Don't allow to come close, in a way? (4,2,3)
17 Hunter in the sky? (5)
19 Some exams (5)
20 Drift of events (5)
21 The abominable snowman (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: O EQUALS H

G IGX'R OJIYKGXL NR SOYBYEYB OY TBJRTYBR

Linemaro

Do you know any good bakeries around? I would like to have

Mindchow

The aim of life is appreciation; there is no sense in not appreciating things; and there is no sense in having more of them if you have less appreciation of them

Joke of the day

Euphemism is a euphemism for lying

Loop

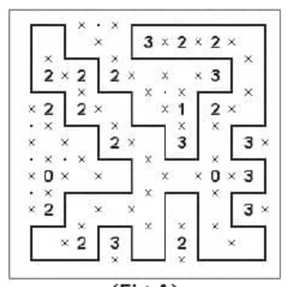
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

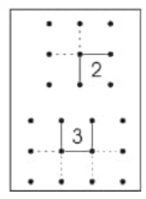
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

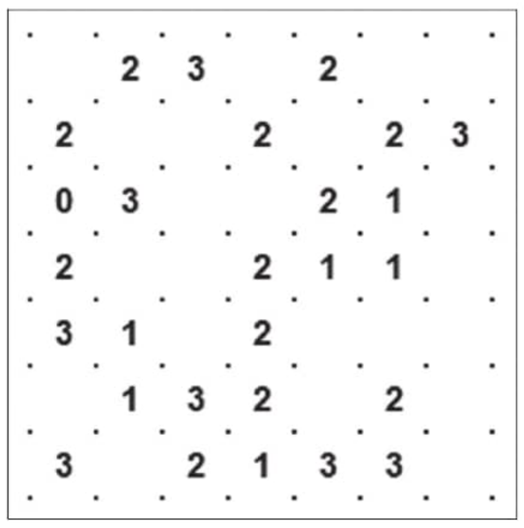
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



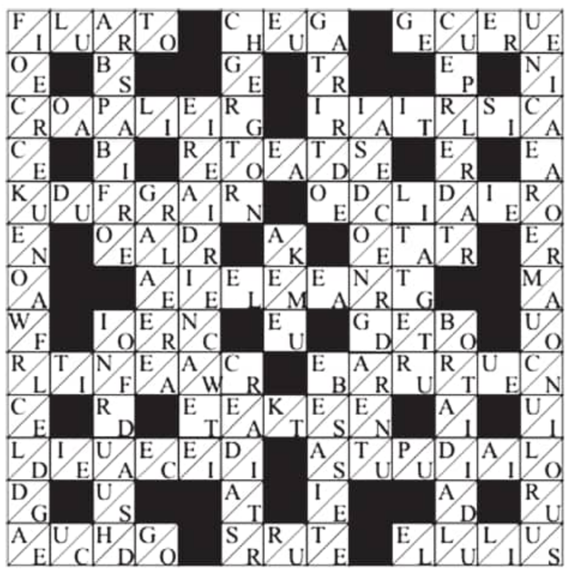
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



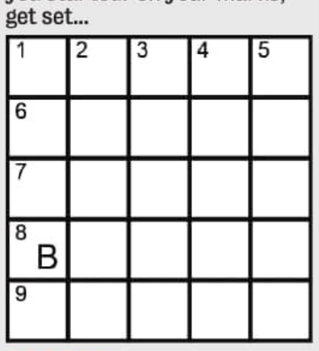
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

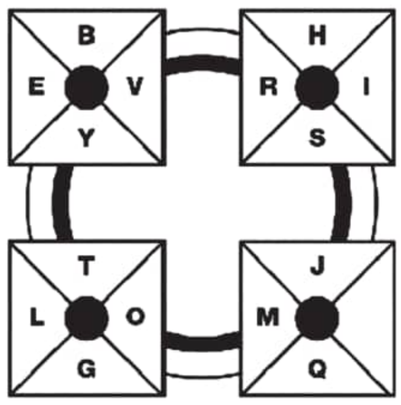
1 Rag SS; 6 Rap me;
7 Tuile; 8 Blain;
9 So Lip

DOWN

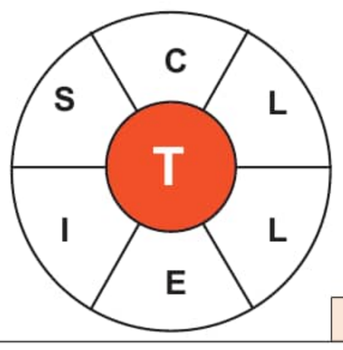
1 Burgs; 2 Tripe;
3 Naomi; 4 Alias;
5 Pells

Mensapuzzle

Which letter replaces the blank and completes the sequence?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

11 Average; 13 Good; 15 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

		2	4		3	5		
	8			2			4	
5			7		8			6
2		1				7		9
				6				
6		5				8		4
1			9		2			7
	2			7			9	
		7	5		6	4		

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 9

1 4 5 7

Medium = 16

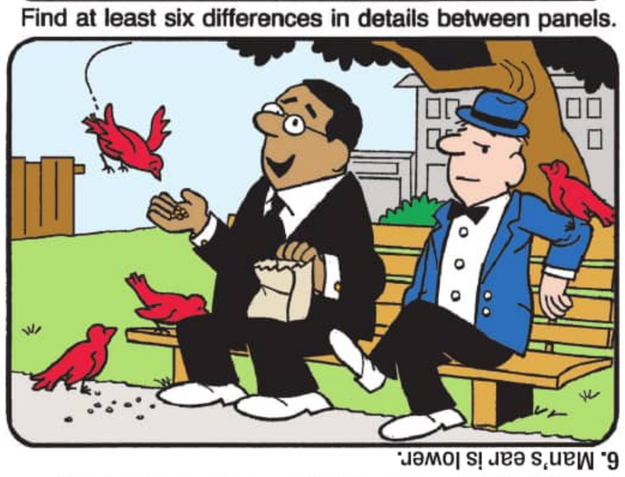
1 4 5 8

Hard = 25

2 3 4 5

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



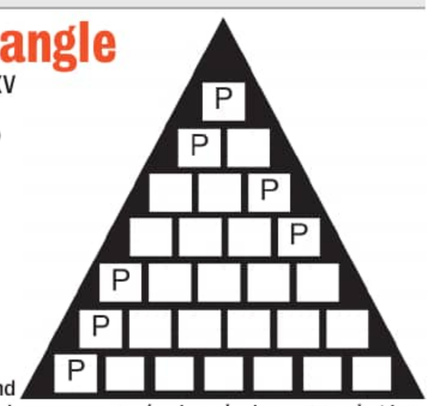
Differences: 1. Bench is wider. 2. Fence is higher. 3. Bird is moved. 4. Foot is moved. 5. Hat is tilted back. 6. Man's ear is lower.

Riddler

On the sixth of May in the year 1978 at exactly thirty-four minutes past noon, a most extraordinary event occurred. This singular occasion will probably never be witnessed by anyone who was alive at that time. What happened? (Hint: This happened in the US)

Alpha triangle

1 Atomic number XV
2 (22/7)
3 Sartorial mishap
4 Leak
5 Was nosey
6 Full stop
7 Allow for



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

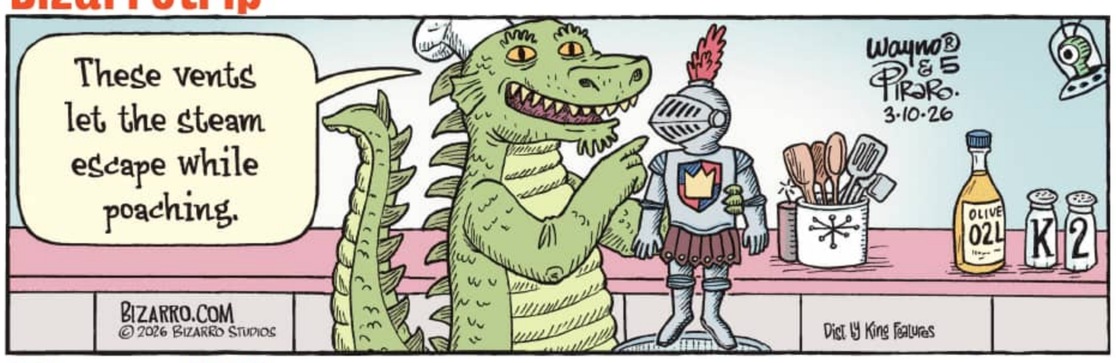
DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE »

COMICS

Popeye

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
I HAS A PROBLEM!
I HAS TO GO OUT IN THE WORLD AND FIND MESELF!
YER NOT LEAVIN' THIS HOUSE UNTIL YOU CLEAN YER ROOM!
YA CAN'T WIN!
9-18
popeye.com

Bizarrotrip



Diamond Lil

WHAT FLAVOR WOULD YOU BE IF YOU WERE A POTATO CHIP, HOWARD?
THAT'S EASY! MY FAVORITE ONE!
SPICY ROADKILL CHEDDAR AND SOUR CREAM!
THAT'S NOT A REAL POTATO CHIP FLAVOR!
OH, NO?...MY GARAGE, FIVE O'CLOCK! BRING PEANUT OIL AND A SHOVEL!
3/28
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Hart of the city

YOU COMING OVER FOR WARHAMMER TONIGHT?
NO, I'M HELPING TOBY WITH HISTORY HOMEWORK.
HE'S ALWAYS DOING THAT.
DOING WHAT?
HE FLIRTS WITH SMART GIRLS TO GET THEM TO DO HIS HOMEWORK FOR HIM.
OMG, ARE YOU FOR REAL?
OH, NO! I NEED TO WARN HEART!
HEART OF THE CITY © 2026 ANDREWS MCMEEL
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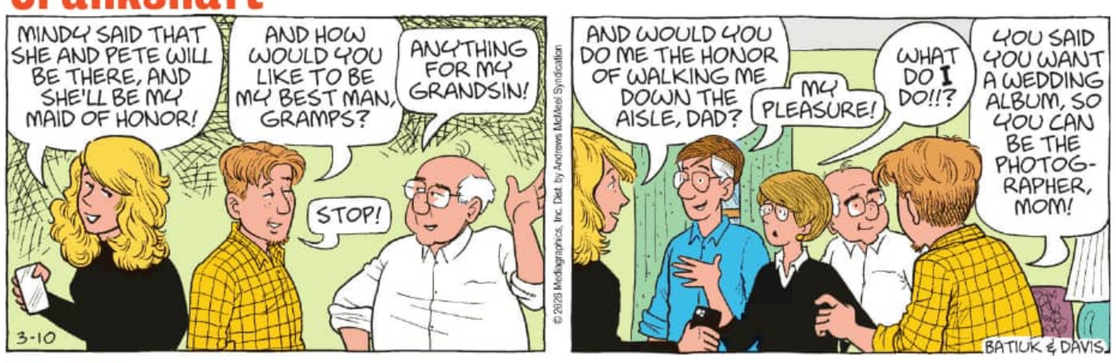
Crankshaft


MINDY SAID THAT SHE AND PETE WILL BE THERE, AND SHE'LL BE MY MAID OF HONOR!
AND HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE MY BEST MAN, GRAMPS?
ANYTHING FOR MY GRANDSIN!
STOP!
AND WOULD YOU DO ME THE HONOR OF WALKING ME DOWN THE AISLE, DAD?
MY PLEASURE!
WHAT DO I DO!!?
YOU SAID YOU WANT A WEDDING ALBUM, SO YOU CAN BE THE PHOTOGRAPHER, MOM!
3-10
BATIUK & DAVIS

Mutts

WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR

If it's your birthday today

As the solstice approaches, you experience a beautiful spiritual awakening or a deep sense of inner peace. Career demands slow down, allowing you to focus on personal creative passions. A surprise financial bonus arrives just in time for weekend plans. Romance is filled with poetic expressions of affection. Drink herbal teas to soothe your nervous system tonight.

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20

Before making important decisions today, consider how your words and actions may affect others emotionally. Thoughtful communication strengthens relationships beautifully. Taking an extra moment before speaking helps prevent misunderstandings and keeps interactions kind, balanced, and supportive.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20

Work responsibilities may temporarily create distance from loved ones today, though better planning restores balance beautifully. Organizing your schedule carefully helps you manage both personal and professional commitments smoothly without sacrificing meaningful relationships or emotional wellbeing.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21

Today encourages you to step courageously beyond your comfort zone and face lingering fears confidently. Trying something unfamiliar opens exciting possibilities for growth. Taking bold action now helps strengthen confidence, independence, and your belief in yourself.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23

Learning to say no becomes especially important today as extra responsibilities begin piling up around you. Protecting your energy and time helps avoid unnecessary stress beautifully. Prioritise only what feels manageable and emotionally healthy for you.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23

Work no longer deserves your complete attention today, especially when personal dreams and experiences call for exploration instead. Use your stability wisely by enjoying life beyond responsibilities. Happiness grows when you create space for yourself too.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23

Careful analysis becomes essential today, especially regarding contracts, legal matters, or major commitments. Reading details thoroughly protects your interests beautifully. Avoid rushing important decisions and trust your instincts if something feels unclear or questionable initially.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22

Solitude and personal space feel especially healing today after too much social interaction recently. Spending quiet time alone restores your balance beautifully. Enjoy activities that comfort you emotionally while allowing your mind and energy to recharge.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22

Changing your routine and approaching life differently today brings excitement, inspiration, and fresh perspective naturally. Breaking away from monotony helps restore motivation beautifully. Experimenting with new methods and experiences keeps life feeling engaging and creatively fulfilling.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22

Your enthusiasm and energy reach impressive levels today, helping you complete postponed responsibilities efficiently and confidently. Channeling this motivation into work may attract recognition or rewarding opportunities. Staying focused now brings success, productivity, and exciting progress.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20

Negative thinking may cloud your perspective today, though practical problem-solving helps shift everything positively again. Focusing on solutions rather than worst-case scenarios restores clarity beautifully. Optimism and action together help you overcome challenges far more effectively.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19

Confidence shines naturally through you today, making this a perfect moment to embrace attention and express yourself boldly. Your charisma attracts admiration effortlessly. Enjoy stepping into the spotlight while celebrating your individuality, positivity, and magnetic energy fully.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20

Leadership responsibilities place you at the center of attention today, giving you influence and authority naturally. Stay grounded and responsible while guiding others carefully. Confidence, balance, and thoughtful decision-making help your leadership skills shine beautifully now.

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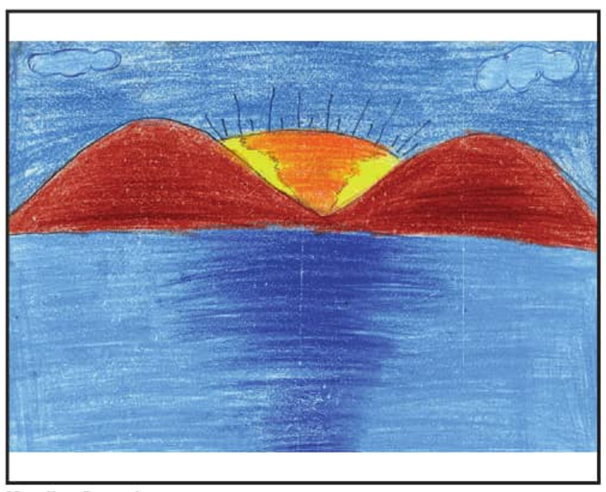
KIDZONE

Arush, Bengaluru



Mugdha, Bengaluru

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011; Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M

$=6\uparrow 1/(\frac{1}{2}) \times 3\uparrow -2$
$=6\uparrow 2\times 3\uparrow -2$
$=3\uparrow 2\times 2\uparrow 2\times 3\uparrow -2$
$=3\uparrow (2+(-2))\times 2\uparrow 2$
$=3\uparrow 0\times 4$
$=1\times 4$
$=4$

RIDDLER The time and date was 12:34 5/6/78, counting from one to eight. The next time this event will occur is 12:34 6 May 2078. Unless you live to be over a hundred, you won't be alive when it happens again.

FAST FIVE

G	R	A	S	S
R	E	M	A	P
U	T	I	L	E
B	I	N	A	L
S	P	O	I	L

BULL'S EYE

CELLIST, cite, islet, lest, lilt, list, sect, silt, site, slit, stile, still, tell, tile, till

STRIKE OUT

QUICK

MENSA PUZZLE

N. In each square letters in opposite segments hold the same position in the alphabet running forwards as they do going backwards.

QUOTE UNCODE

A man's homeland is wherever he prospers

SUDOKU

3	9	7	5	8	6	4	1	2
4	2	8	3	7	1	6	9	5
1	5	6	9	4	2	3	8	7
6	7	5	1	3	9	8	2	4
8	4	9	2	6	7	1	5	3
2	3	1	8	5	4	7	6	9
5	1	4	7	9	8	2	3	6
7	8	3	6	2	5	9	4	1
9	6	2	4	1	3	5	7	8

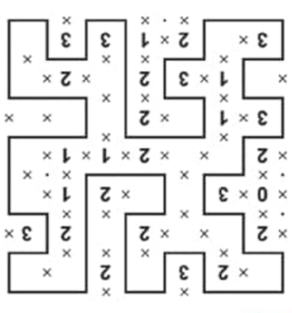
ALPHA TRIANGLE

P, Pl, Rip, Drip, Pried, Period, Provide.

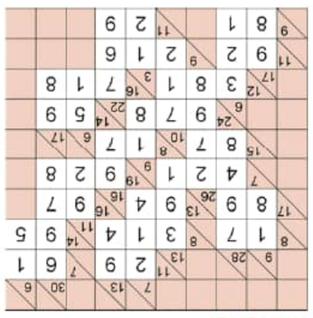
GO FIGURE

Easy
5 + 7 − 4 + 1 = 9
Medium
4 + 5 + 8 − 1 = 16
Hard
2 + 3 x 4 + 5 = 25

LOOP



KAKURO



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LG NanoCell TV 2026 1m 40cm (55)

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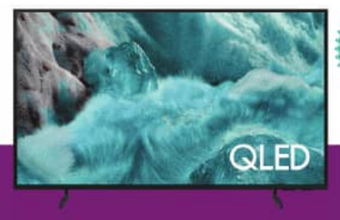

40% OFF*

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MRP	₹81,000*
Product Cashback Up to#	₹4,000*
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Save up to 10% on Samsung Soundbar with TV Purchase*

46% OFF*

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MRP	₹38,500*
Selling Price	₹24,890*
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Exchange Value Up to	₹1,000*
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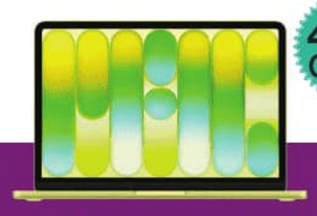

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